



Flathead National Forest

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Media Release

July 3, 2012

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Island Unit Trail Systems Addition Authorized

Both Motorized and Non-Motorized Trails to be Built

BIGFORK, MT – The Swan Lake District Ranger has published a decision for the development of more than 35 miles of new trails on Blacktail Mountain giving local hikers, bikers and motorized trail enthusiasts new recreation opportunities.

On Monday Swan Lake Ranger District Richard H Kehr Jr. published the Decision Notice for the Island Unit Trail System Additions Project. The Island Unit is the area of National Forest System lands west of Lakeside and south of Kalispell and Kila commonly known as Blacktail Mountain.

“This project, many years in the making, authorizes a great mix of new motorized and non-motorized trails and will provide better opportunities for managing the existing recreational use of the Island Unit,” said District Ranger Rich Kehr.

The project authorizes two new motorized loop trail systems. One is nine miles in the Truman Creek Drainage that extends the existing Blacktail Wild Bill OHV Trail, and the other is 15 miles on Kerr Mountain, which is also part of the existing Blacktail Nordic Trail System. Two new non-motorized trails totaling 11.5 miles are also authorized, the Foy’s to Blacktail Trail and a trail from Lakeside to Blacktail. In combination with the existing trail system and designated roads to link it all together, there will be a total of 63 miles of trails on the Island Unit.

“The selected alternative is the result of many years of collaboration with local motorized and non-motorized user groups, other government agencies and interested citizens. It is a compromise that provides some great trails while minimizing effects to wildlife habitat and minimizing the potential for conflict between recreational groups,” said project leader Andrew K. Johnson. “The proposal generated a lot of interest, both in support of and against the new trails.”

Since the project was first scoped to the public in 2007, more than 300 comments were received on the Proposed Action and Environmental Assessment.

“One critical element of this decision and this project is that it works toward resolving problem recreation use on the Island Unit, such as ATV use on closed roads. By providing appropriate places to ride and installing better closures across the area,” added Johnson.

A 45 day appeal period began Monday July 2, 2012 and ends August 16, 2012.

For more information on the project visit www.fs.fed.us/flathead, or contact Johnson at the Swan Lake Ranger District at 406-837-7507 or by email at andrewjohnson@fs.fed.us.

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